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International Court of Justice

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 19 July 1948

I certify that Document Number L-141 was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number USA-231 in the Trial by the International Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document L-191 No. USA - 231 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the United States Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the National Archives, Washington D.C. .

Nuremberg, 15 July 1948

Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military
Tribunal

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CHAPTER VII

THE TODT ORGANISATION

The Todt Organisation, a vast undertaking for the construction of highways and fortifications, became one of the most important institutions of the National Socialist war machine. It owed its name to Dr. Fritz Todt, Major-General of the Air Force and holder of one of the highest ranks in the S.A. (*Standartenführer* on the Staff of the Supreme S.A. Leader)[1], who began his spectacular career immediately after the Party came into power in Germany. From June 1933, as Inspector-General of the German Highway System he was responsible for the construction of the network of strategic highways that preceded the outbreak of war.[2]

Fifteen months before military hostilities began, on 28 May 1938, the Todt Organisation was founded, with Fritz Todt at its head, mainly with the object of hastening the completion of the West Wall. Soon afterwards, by Decree of 9 December 1938, Todt was appointed Commissioner-General for the Construction Industry. Early in 1940, he was also made Inspector-General for Special Tasks under the Four-Year Plan, Inspector-General for Water and Electric Power and—just before the beginning of the German offensive in the West—Reich Minister of Armament and Munitions.

When Fritz Todt was killed in an air accident he was succeeded in all his posts by Professor Albert Speer, Inspector-General of Urban Development of the City of Berlin (15 February 1942). In homage to Todt, the Organisation continued to be known as the Todt Organisation ("O.T."). Only one branch, which was most directly connected with the armed forces, was called the "Speer Construction Staff".

[1] Another post in the Party hierarchy held by Dr. Todt was "Head of the Central Office for Technology of the National Socialist German Workers' Party".

[2] Under the Act of 17 June 1933, the Highway Construction Administration planned the construction of 4,500 to 4,800 miles of roads. It is estimated that less than two thirds of the programme was actually carried out; cf. Alfred VAGTS: *Hitler's Second Army* (*Infantry Journal*, Washington, D.C. (Penguin Special), 1943, pp. 118-119). By 1938 the construction of the West Wall and of other fortifications, which strained German building and affiliated industries to the utmost, was considered more urgent than the continuation of the highway construction programme.

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From the first German victories in the East, the Organisation went on extending its widespread activities to every newly won territory. It was the Organisation, for example, which erected the intricate system of defensive fortifications stretching from the northern part of Norway to the Spanish frontier (the so-called "Atlantic Wall").

In the words of the Reich Labour Trustee for the Todt Organisation:

> . . . next to the *Reichsbahn* [the State-owned railways] . . . the "O.T." is today undoubtedly the biggest employer in the world. Many hundreds of thousands of foreign workers are working side by side with a nucleus of German "O.T." workers at thousands of building sites.
>
> . . . On the Atlantic Wall alone, workers from more than a dozen different countries are employed: Belgians and Netherlanders, Frenchmen and Flemings, Italians and Croats, Czechs and Poles, Spaniards and Danes, Moroccans and other African tribes, even Indians, Annamites and Indo-Chinese (taken prisoner with the French Army) as well as workers from the East . . .[1]

The *Nachrichtendienst der Deutschen Zeitungsverleger*, official news agency of the German newspaper publishers, made the following comment on this statement:

> Wherever there are German soldiers, there too the earth-brown uniform of the "O.T." worker is to be found. On every front, he has proved himself the indispensable helper of the troops.
>
> . . . The "O.T." builds everything: pill-boxes and coastal fortifications, roads, snow tunnels, railways and bridges, harbours and quay installations, armament works and power stations; it even develops and works mines, bores for oil and mines other raw materials.

The list was not complete. This giant organisation also performed the following war tasks in all parts of the continent of Europe: repair of bomb damage; removal of German industries, or industries working for Germany, out of reach of Allied bombers; and, when necessary, construction of trenches, military camps, hangars, airfields and the like, and repair of damage at and immediately behind the German front lines. The Todt Organisation also constructed, with the greatest secrecy, the installations for the launching of the "robot" bombs and other weapons used by Germany after the opening of the western front in June 1944.

The longer the war lasted, the greater became the tasks and the importance of the Organisation. On 2 September 1943 Adolf Hitler issued a Decree[2] which redefined them:

> (1) The "O.T." is an institution for the performance of construction tasks of all kinds essential to the outcome of the war. The head of the "O.T." is the Reich Minister of Armament and Munitions. He is directly subordinate to me and is responsible exclusively to me.
>
> (2) The "O.T." can be employed in the Greater German Reich as well as in the territories annexed to and occupied by it. The "O.T." is to go into action at the command of the head of the "O.T."
>
> (3) Paragraphs (1) and (2) also apply to the transportation services working under the "O.T."

[1] *Neue Deutsche Zeitung*, 7 May 1943.
[2] *Reichsgesetzblatt*, Part 1, p. 530.

On the same day Adolf Hitler greatly increased Professor Speer's jurisdiction by putting the entire German armament industry under him.[1] (This limited the powers of the Reich Minister for Economic Affairs, but not those of the Commissioner-General for Manpower.)

* * *

The methods used for the recruitment of foreign workers who were destined for employment in the Organisation did not greatly differ from the methods used for the recruitment of foreigners for deportation to Germany. The main difference was that, since the principal activities of the Organisation lay outside the frontiers of Germany, foreigners were not transported to Germany, but had either to work in their own country or in some other occupied territory.

In the recruitment drives for foreign workers for the Organisation, methods of compulsion as well as methods of persuasion were used, the latter usually with very little result. For example, in the summer and autumn of 1942, in the Flemish-speaking parts of Belgium, an intensive recruitment campaign was undertaken for the Organisation, which "was ready to receive Flemish workers with open arms".[2] A special Flemish section of the Organisation was formed, which was employed in some of the German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union. Immediately behind the fighting front the men had to build roads, railways, airfields and depots for the *Luftwaffe*. These contingents, as *Obergeneral-Arbeitsführer* Dr. Decker, a high official of the Organisation, pointed out[3], were "liable to be attacked by bombers and dive bombers", and even had to fight "as infantrymen with the regular army during the heavy defensive fighting in the Rzev area". On 26 October 1942, a ceremony was held in Brussels in honour of the three thousandth Flemish worker leaving Belgium to join this contingent of the

[1] *Reichsgesetzblatt*, Part I, p. 529. Under the same Decree Professor Speer's title was changed from "Reich Minister of Armament and Munitions" to "Reich Minister for Armament and War Production", "in view of his increased responsibilities".
[2] *Volk en Staat*, 15 Oct. 1942.
[3] *Der Arbeitsmann*, quoted by *Neue Deutsche Zeitung*, 4 Sept. 1942.

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Teilweise Uebersetzung des Dokuments
L 191
Office of U.S. Chief of Counsel

Internationales Arbeits Amt

Die Ausnuetzung von auslaendischen Arbeitskraeften in Deutschland

Montreal 1945.

Seite 71 Organization Todt

Seite 73, Zeile 13-23

Die Methoden die fuer die Anwerbung von auslaendischen Arbeitern benutzt wurden, die fuer Beschaeftigung in der Organization bestimmt waren, waren nicht sehr verschieden von den Methoden die fuer die Anwerbung von Auslaendern zur Deportation nach Deutschland benutzt wurden. Der Hauptunterschied war der, dass die Haupttaetigkeit der Organization ausserhalb der Grenzen Deutschlands lag und Auslaender deshalb nicht nach Deutschland transportiert wurden sondern entweder in ihrem Lande arbeiteten oder in einem anderen besetzten Gebiet.

In den Anwerbungsaktionen fuer auslaendische Arbeiter fuer die Organisation wurden sowohl zwangsmaessige als auch Methoden der Ueberredung versucht, die letzteren gewoehnlich mit sehr wenig Erfolg.

UEBERSETZUNGSBESCHEINIGUNG FUER DOKUMENT NR. L 191.

26 November 1945.

Ich, LEO LOEB, bescheinige hiermit, dass ich sorgfaeltig mit der deutschen und englischen Sprache bekannt bin, und dass das vorhergehende eine wahrheitsgemaese und genaue Uebersetzung von Auszuegen aus Dokument Nr. L 191, ist.

LEO LOEB
Zivilist.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
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See also Pidgeon Hole

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